

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, Eliza Symonds Bell, Melville Bell, Carrie Bell, September 2, 1869, with transcript

Letter written by Alexander Graham Bell to his Parents. Branton, September 2, 1869.
Dear P. M. M. C. & B.

We directed our steps westward until we were stopped by the waters of the “bring ocean” at the little watering-place of “Westward Ho.” We then (after bathing of course) turned northwards till we got close to Appledore. Here we found ourselves walking in soft sinking mud and were glad to be relieved from our awkward position by hailing a fishing-boat. The men took us for a short sail and then landed us on the opposite coast by a light-house on “the Burrows”. From here we walked to the village of Branton and found all the inns full of travellers like ours elves. We have managed however to get a comfortable room at a bacon and cheese shop. Our bed is 1/- and what our tea and breakfast will come to we shall find out in a few minutes. The scenery we passed through was very pretty indeed until we reached Torrington. It then became absolutely lovely — and gradually came up to a climax at Bideford. I was much struck with a photograph of the town, which I sent to you. We got your letter on Wednesday morning before leaving. We are quite disgusted with the celebrated “Devonshire lanes.” They are very pretty in themselves but they shut out the scenery on all sides. All the peeps of the country we had until we reached Torrington were obtained by climbing. The roads are cut deep down in the red soil and the material which has been taken from the road is heaped up on each side. The banks on either hand are covered with luxurious 2 foliage, but you can understand that we soon ceased to admire these when we found we had to climb them to see the country.

We find practically how beneficial it is to take only two meals a day. We make a solid breakfast before starting — and a tremendous tea-dinner in the evening. We could almost

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do without any breakfast or tea we find so many splendid ripe black-berries by the road-sides. From Exeter to Bideford the heat has been most intense. Our shirts were soaked through with perspiration — and I can assure you I did not feel a bit thankful for the overcoat I was obliged to carry. But near Bideford we began to smell the sea and since then the air has been delightfully bracing— certainly not a bit relaxing. I felt as strong as a horse the moment I got near the sea.

At Bideford I had rather an awkward mishap. Hitherto we have had no occasion — [???] “[???]” A ll the country has been [???]. But in the Temperance Hotel Bideford we looked about us — and sure enough — down a little passage we saw [???] [???] [???] [???] and a [???] [???] [???] [???] [???] [???] [???]. So after a while I ventured out with the candle — and fancying I heard some one coming bolted in . Lo! I found myself [???] [???] fortunately [???] I need not say I rushed out again before [???] time to [???]

I am dear Papa and Mama Your affectionate son, A. Graham Bell.

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P. S. At Torrington we entered the church-yard where I took a note of some curious inscriptions which I send to you.

“Praises on tombs are vainly spent A woman's good name is her own monument.”

“Weep not for me my parents dear My pain was great while i was here Lament no more it is all in vain You cannot call me back again.”

The next is broken but we have attempted to supply the gaps.

My Glass is run my time is spent my life is done it was But lent so I am now so must you be therefore prepare to Follow me.

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Superviser of Excise. Here lyeth y e Bodys of 3 children dear Two sons and a daughter of John and Hester Vere Which from this World are all set free to live with Christ Eternally.

4 years months Hester Mar. 1st 1741 0 3 William Vere Departed this life April 7th 1742 Aged 3 10 John Dec. 11th 1742 7 8

On to Ilfracombe tonight. AGB.